

where that leads in terms of other necessary Corps reforms in the near future.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 2141. A bill to amend the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, to make it unlawful for a packer to own, feed, or control livestock intended for slaughter; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation designed to help family farmers across this nation have a more level playing field when it comes to livestock markets. The bill would prohibit meat packers from owning livestock. The ownership of livestock by packers compromises the marketplace and hinders the ability of the farmer to receive a fair price. It is simple, as one meatpacking executive once told me, packers own livestock so that when prices are high, they slaughter their own livestock. When prices are low, they buy from farmers.

I would love to say opportunities for independent producers have gotten better since the last time we debated this bill during the 2008 Farm Bill. But that simply isn't the case. We are to the point where most farmers have to deliver their livestock to one of a few very large packers. Farmers' bargaining power is diminished by the sheer size and economic position of the packers. But beyond that, farmers have to compete with the livestock owned by the packing plant itself. The packer ban would make sure the forces of the marketplace work for the benefit of the farmer as much as it does for the slaughterhouse.

I am sure there will be folks in the packing industry that point out that farmers are doing okay right now, and that's great that farmers are experiencing a good period. I am pleased anytime the hard work of livestock farmers results in a good price. But I don't want my colleagues here in the Senate to be lulled to sleep and think just because prices are good right now means we don't have competition issues in the livestock industry that need to be addressed. This is about ensuring farmers are able to get fair prices for years to come. We need to work today, and implement this reform, to ensure the next generation of independent farmers has an opportunity to raise livestock and receive fair prices as a result of their hard work.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2141

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PROHIBITION ON PACKERS OWNING, FEEDING, OR CONTROLLING LIVESTOCK.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 202 of the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7 U.S.C. 192), is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (g) and (h), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

“(f) Own or feed livestock directly, through a subsidiary, or through an arrangement that gives the packer operational, managerial, or supervisory control over the livestock, or over the farming operation that produces the livestock, to such an extent that the producer is no longer materially participating in the management of the operation with respect to the production of the livestock, except that this subsection shall not apply to—

“(1) an arrangement entered into within 7 days (excluding any Saturday or Sunday) before slaughter of the livestock by a packer, a person acting through the packer, or a person that directly or indirectly controls, or is controlled by or under common control with, the packer;

“(2) a cooperative or entity owned by a cooperative, if a majority of the ownership interest in the cooperative is held by active cooperative members that—

“(A) own, feed, or control livestock; and

“(B) provide the livestock to the cooperative for slaughter;

“(3) a packer that is not required to report to the Secretary on each reporting day (as defined in section 212 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1635a)) information on the price and quantity of livestock purchased by the packer; or

“(4) a packer that owns 1 livestock processing plant; or”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the amendments made by subsection (a) take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) TRANSITION RULES.—In the case of a packer that on the date of enactment of this Act owns, feeds, or controls livestock intended for slaughter in violation of section 202(f) of the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (as amended by subsection (a)), the amendments made by subsection (a) apply to the packer—

(A) in the case of a packer of swine, beginning on the date that is 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) in the case of a packer of any other type of livestock, beginning as soon as practicable, but not later than 180 days, after the date of enactment of this Act, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 382—DESIGNATING MARCH 2, 2012, AS “READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY”

Mr. REED of Rhode Island (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 382

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success, and is a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas the people of the United States must be able to read if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and on providing additional resources for reading assistance,

including through the programs authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) and through annual appropriations for library and literacy programs; and

Whereas more than 50 national organizations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to designate March 2, the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel (also known as Dr. Seuss), as a day to celebrate reading; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2, 2012, as “Read Across America Day”;;

(2) honors Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading;

(3) honors the 15th anniversary of “Read Across America Day”;;

(4) encourages parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on “Read Across America Day” in honor of the commitment of the Senate to building a country of readers; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to observe “Read Across America Day” with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 383—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 29, 2012, AS “RARE DISEASE DAY”

Mr. BROWN of Ohio (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 383

Whereas rare diseases and disorders are those diseases and disorders that affect a small patient population, which in the United States is typically a population of fewer than 200,000 people;

Whereas, as of the date of approval of this resolution, nearly 7,000 rare diseases affect 30,000,000 people and their families in the United States;

Whereas children with rare genetic diseases account for more than half of the population affected by rare diseases in the United States;

Whereas many rare diseases are life-threatening and lack an effective treatment; Whereas rare diseases and disorders include epidermolysis bullosa, progeria, sickle cell anemia, Tay-Sachs disease, cystic fibrosis, many childhood cancers, and fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva;

Whereas people with a rare disease experience challenges that include difficulty in obtaining an accurate diagnosis, limited treatment options, and difficulty finding a physician or treatment center with expertise in the disease;

Whereas great strides have been made in research and treatment for rare diseases as a result of the Orphan Drug Act (21 U.S.C. 360aa et seq.);

Whereas both the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health have established special offices to advocate for rare disease research and treatments;

Whereas the National Organization for Rare Disorders, an organization established in 1983 to provide services to, and advocate on behalf of, patients with rare diseases, was a primary force behind the enactment of the Orphan Drug Act and remains a critical public voice for people with rare diseases;

Whereas the National Organization for Rare Disorders sponsors Rare Disease Day in the United States to increase public awareness of rare diseases;

Whereas Rare Disease Day has become a global event that occurs annually on the last day of February;